

Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-01) released a statement following an announcement by the Obama Administration of a draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement to assess proposed geological and geophysical activities, including seismic and other offshore surveys, in the Mid- and South-Atlantic planning areas. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar traveled to Norfolk, Virginia, today for the announcement.

“It is disappointing that the President continues to deny Virginia the freedom to further develop our energy supply and create jobs through the delay of the lease sale,” Wittman said. “Without potential for development in the near future this is a futile step – there is still no actual energy development planned in the foreseeable future due to the delays by this Administration. Today’s announcement is a simple reminder that Virginia must still wait six years to develop its own energy. Virginia has an opportunity to develop American energy offshore and benefit from thousands of related jobs and increased energy production. I hear from folks around America’s First District each week, about the concerns they have with high gas prices. By continuing the delay, the Administration fails to address the issue of high gas prices and to acknowledge the effect these prices have on individuals, families and small businesses.”

Wittman has supported numerous legislative efforts to develop American energy, and promote an all-of-the-above energy policy, including development of offshore energy in the Outer Continental Shelf, and introducing legislation to expedite permits for wind energy development. Wittman has led previous efforts to encourage the Administration to reconsider its decision to ban energy development off the coast of Virginia, leading a letter to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar in November 2011 voicing opposition to the ban.

The current five-year plan (2007-2012) included a lease sale (#220) off the Virginia Coast in 2011. In May 2010, the Obama Administration [cancelled](#) the Virginia lease sale. Later, the Obama Administration released a draft plan for offshore drilling through 2017. This plan places the entire Pacific Coast, the entire Atlantic Coast, the Eastern Gulf and parts of Alaska off limits to future energy production.

*Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.*